

**WASHINGTON COMMERCE CORRIDOR PROJECT UPDATE**  
**BRIEFING PAPER**

Prepared for the  
December 2004 Transportation Commission Meeting

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**PURPOSE:**

Present draft findings from the Washington State Commerce Corridor Feasibility Study.

**ACTION/OUTCOME:**

Update the Commission on the draft findings and incorporate their input into the final report.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Washington State Legislature appropriated \$500,000 for a feasibility study of a Washington State Commerce Corridor in the 2003-2005 transportation budget. The study's geographic scope extends from Lewis County to the Canadian border, east of I-5 and west of the Cascade Mountains, and contains the mainline railroads and major intercity pipeline facilities. The legislature posed two questions in the study:

1. Is it possible to build an alternative passenger and truck transportation route to I-5, in a corridor that includes rail and utility transport? What are the legal, environmental, community and financial issues involved in such a complex project?
2. Is the private sector willing to finance the facility?

**DISCUSSION:**

- The legislature funded this effort because of the growing recognition that western Washington may need additional pipeline capacity for natural gas and petroleum, transmission lines for power, and new options for moving truck and rail freight.
- In addition to noting community and environmental impacts, the study's draft findings show that there is no private sector interest in funding an energy or rail corridor, and that passenger tolling is not feasible. In addition, long-haul truck volumes north of Central Puget Sound are too low to support corridor costs. The study found that there may be enough long-haul truck trips from Central Puget Sound south to Oregon, to fund a portion of costs through truck tolls if the trucking industry found that they could increase productivity and lower their overall costs via a new corridor.
- Over the course of this study WSDOT held three public forums in Bellevue, Bellingham and Chehalis.

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